

Michigan State University
DEAN, COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND PUBLIC SERVICE

Memorandum to: President Hamm

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JAN 21 1961

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MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
President's Office

Signed

James J. Austin

Saigon Press Comments:

FOREIGN PRESS REPORTS ON NOV. 11
REBELLION BLASTED

Saigon (VP) Jan. 9

Western press allegations about the attempted coup d'etat in Saigon last November 11-12 have been the subject of angry editorial criticisms by Saigon newspapers in recent weeks.

The daily Bao Sanh (Morning Post) of January 1, in a column signed by Ann Thanh, referred to the 6,500-word article of the French-language weekly, Extreme Asie (Far Asia) of December 3 and said in part:

"Once I looked at European and American journalists with deep admiration and even dreamt of becoming a great correspondent who could travel here and there throughout the world, interviewing great men and leaders, or a war correspondent who could go anywhere in the world, to any trouble spot to cover the events for my newspapers....

"But when some of these spectacular correspondents and journalists arrived here last November to cover the attempted coup d'etat in Saigon, and when I read their subsequent reports of the Saigon events, I was stupefied. My old dream of becoming an international correspondent or anything of the like was deflated. I can now realise that those whom I once respected from the bottom of my heart, from the professional point of view, have, in fact, neither the scruples of an intellectual nor a professional conscience. They came here to color, show bias, slant, embroider and even distort the truths. They went so far as to slander us....

"The resounding blow given them by the magazine Extreme Asie on December 3 thus was justified....

"The French daily, France Soir, which claims a circulation of 1.3 million, dared to allege that "the Saigon people has shouted for the downfall of the Ngo family" and that a mammoth anti-Ngo demonstration had taken place in Saigon. The story was followed by a series of articles by Correspondent Alex Raynaut, who claimed that 'at Thu Duc, 12 kilometres from Saigon, at 7 p.m. the Viet Cong stages a military parade.'

"What a great pity for the 1.3 million readers of France Soir to believe in such a fabrication. The paper's Saigon and Thu Duc readers could not help but laugh when they read the story.

"By reading these reports, the Vietnamese journalists should not fail to feel sorry and ashamed for their former dreams of learning something from the talented Western correspondents. They can now pride themselves in being superior to some of their foreign colleagues, at least from the ethical point of view.

"Had they still had any shred of professional conscience, A Raynaut and Co. should have felt very sorry for themselves when the Vietnamese authorities did not condescend to dismiss their groundless reports."

Under the same headline "We're talking to a group of foreign correspondents, "Columnist Anh Thanh made the following comments in his January 4 article:

"Those French and American correspondents who had slandered the Republic of Viet-Nam government and the Ngo family should have aimed at some illegal purpose.

"They were of two separate groups. One longed to return to this country which it regretted being unable to recover... Colonialistic thoughts began to resuscitate in its members' minds at the sight of this country's vast rice plains and prosperous trading centers... The other, because of their superiority complex, guided itself in being the citizens of a civilised great power coming to a backward tiny country for a visit to a little brother. Sometimes it arrogantly posed as a creditor calling on his debtor. Such a state of mind has been translated in the many reports on Viet-Nam which, alas were thoroughly false.

"Correspondent John Roderick claimed, in the New York Herald Tribune of November 12 and 13, that the Progressive Liberal Party stressed that the regime needs to permit more freedom, the armed forces to be reformed, civil rights to be guaranteed and corruption -- which reports said was spreading -- to be wiped out. The correspondent said Mr. Diem did not seem to be willing to carry out any of these tasks.

"We regret to read the article, especially because Roderick is no stranger to Viet-Nam where he stayed for many years as a correspondent to both the Associated Press and New York Herald Tribune...., when he was fully aware of Patriot Ngo Dinh Diem's determination to safeguard the welfare of the Southern Vietnamese people, of his courage to face up to the warring religious sects and his leadership in the people's struggle against the colonialist maneuvers....

"Like other correspondents, Roderick had wanted to show his reporting talent, but what was most ridiculous was that his reports lacked impartiality and objectivity. These correspondents only knew how to describe the facts according to their mean and vindictive designs."

In its January 6 issue, Suoi Sang again questioned the real aims entertained by these foreign correspondents in picturing Free Viet-Nam as a country which is ruled by a dictatorial, rotten regime and where the people are desperately losing all liberties." It asked:

"What really did they want when they tried to draw up such a false picture, based on fabrication, distortion and imagination? Did they want the Vietnamese people to have a living standard equal to the Americans? If so, thank you all Messrs. correspondents. But don't forget that we are still facing difficulties peculiar to our own country -- Communist subversion and colonialism of both the old and new types. Did they want the Vietnamese people to enjoy all the liberties of the French Republic? Then we hereby may ask how far these liberties have led this great champion of freedom (France) during the Third and Fourth Republics. France experienced economic, military and moral weaknesses under the Third...., (and) her ruling regime was transformed into a comic troupe under the Fourth.

"Today these irresponsible people again want Free Viet-Nam to realise the same principles of freedom laid down by the Third and Fourth Republic of France? What a wicked intention when one tries to force a little child who has just learned to walk, to run, and especially to run on the same path on which many of his elder brothers have previously fallen....

"If these gross distortions, these impolite comment on the Vietnamese leader, these calumnies against the Republic of Viet-Nam administration and these unfounded and ill-intentioned reports of the situation in Viet-Nam had not been dictated by the ambition of handfuls of colonialists or by the pride of some rich people who wanted to show their superiority, then the attitude to those foreign correspondents who had recently come to this country, as shown in their reports, should have led us to ask who had been behind the whole scheme. Anyway, their Saigon trips have exerted a bad influence on the foreign journalism profession."

Along the same line, the daily Dan Nguyen (People's Wishes) of December 23 questioned why there had been "so much preoccupation" on the part of these Western correspondents for Viet-Nam. It said:

"What a pity! You 'paper businessmen' and 'newshawks' still have so many jobs to be done. In France, you have your Algerian problem to talk about, in America the racial discrimination dilemma, in Britain, so many 'scandals' about the Royal Family. You 'honest' journalists still have so many subjects at your elbows to exploit at length, haven't you?"

In its December 24 issue, Dan Nguyen traced the roots of these false reports to "the mean, selfish ambitions of some mercantile publishers who capitalised on the Vietnamese events to boost their papers' circulation and those of some correspondents who wanted to make themselves better known among the world's readers."

In its December 26 issue, the same paper asserted:

"In most cases they rely on some political force, such as that of the Colonialists, the Communists and the imperialist capitalists, to blackmail and smear their victims, or to distort the truth about some regime in order to squeeze from it some money....

"As far as we are concerned, their recent comments have made us make a serious reassessment of the question of foreign residents in this country."

Targets for Dan Nguyen's editorial fire included Paris Presse, France Soir, Time, New York Times and New York Herald Tribune.

In the same vein, the daily Tieng Chuong (Bell Sound) of December 22 said:

"We are positive that the French journalists will not be pleased with such reporting missions as those of Larteguy, Haw Clos, Chauvet and Chaffard. But to know the truth about it, we deem the De Gaulle government duty-bound to conduct an investigation, which, we believe, will not be difficult if one is willing to seek the truth."

In its December 24 issue, Tieng Chuong said:

"The time has now come for the Vietnamese authorities to renounce half-measures towards those foreign residents whose activities are prejudicial to Vietnamese society. The question of foreign residents must be reconsidered and stiff, clear-cut measures be taken against all harmful elements, whatever nationality they may be."

Supporting the criticism levelled by the magazine Extreme Asia, the daily Le-Song (Reason for Existence) of December 25 pledged:

"The Vietnamese people, who always observe strictly the principles of hospitality and self-respect, never allow anyone to smear their name and fame.

"Those who sow the wind must reap the storm. Those who have made destructive, instead of constructive, criticisms against us must be treated accordingly. Their ill-intentioned acts must be stopped in order that the Vietnamese people, who need good fellow-travellers in order to push forward their tasks of social revolution, can continue to be hospitable."

VP Monday Jan. 9, 1961 (Morning) No. 1830 Page H.8

FOREIGN DEPARTMENT TO TAKE OVER NIA
PREMISES

Saigon (VP) Jan. 9

The Department of Foreign Affairs will occupy the present offices of the National Institute of Administration when the latter moves to its new compound on Tran Quoc Toan Street sometime this year.

VN\$300,000 has been earmarked for renovation work.